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Social Work Service

AIDS is a Women's Health Issue

We have never been given a reason to think that a virus insensible and unknowing would confine itself to male "risk groups." AIDS is a sexually transmitted disease that can be expected to spread to women." Chris Norwood author of Advice for Life.

ESSENTIAL FACTS

In New York City in 1988, the leading cause of death of women 25-39 yr was AIDS.

In 1987, 7% of all AIDS cases in the United States were women. Heterosexual women are becoming the fastest growing risk group.

In 1987, diagnosed sex-acquired AIDS cases among women were increasing twice as fast as drug-aquired cases.

One in 333 college students are infected with the AIDS virus according to preliminary results of a study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

Women who are young, sexually active with multiple partners and not practicing safer sex increase their risk of infection.

A woman infected with the AIDS virus can transmit the virus to a baby during pregnancy, birth, or breastfeeding.

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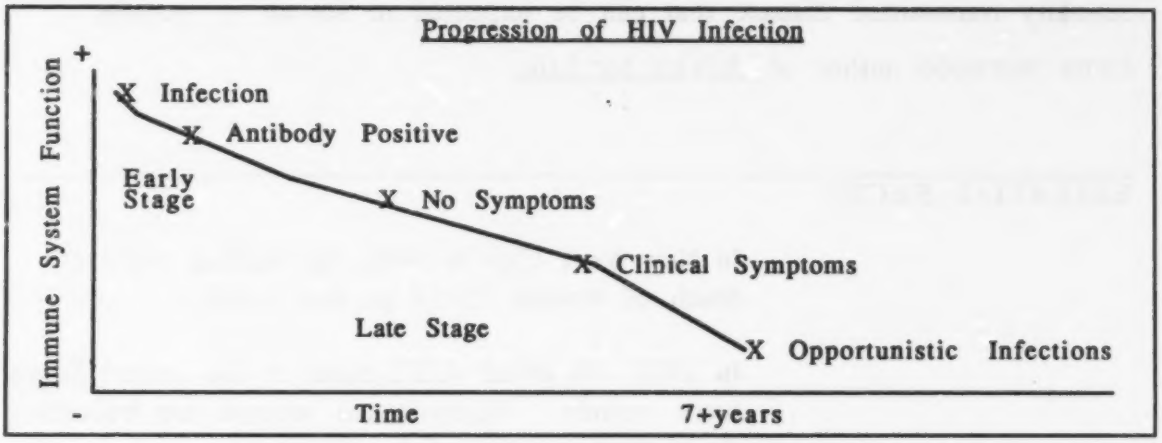
UNDERSTANDING AIDS

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is a disease caused by a virus known as the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).

HIV infection is now viewed as an illness of stages characterized by progressive deterioration of the immune system. AIDS is the terminal stage of HIV infection. Life expectancy is 2-3 years following a diagnosis of AIDS.



HIV TRANSMISSION

Body fluids including blood, semen, and breast milk are considered the main pathways by which HIV is transmitted or passed from person to person.

Behaviors that involve the exchange of infected body fluids can result in HIV infection.

These behaviors are sexual practices, sharing needles, receiving contaminated blood products, pregnancy and breastfeeding.

A person who becomes infected is infectious to others through sex, blood, and pregnancy for the rest of his or her life.

BEHAVIORS THAT INCREASE RISK

Shared IV needles since 1977.

Sex without condoms with an infected partner since 1977. High risk partners include IV drug abusers, bisexual men, promiscuous heterosexual men (prostitute or homosexual contact) or hemophiliacs.

Multiple sex partners. Sex partners who have sex without condoms with someone at high risk.

BEHAVIORS THAT DECREASE RISK

Monogamous relationship where neither partner has used IV drugs, or had sex with someone else since 1977 or received blood products during the risk years 1977-1985.

Using condoms and spermicide for safer sex.

Communicating with sex partners about sexual history or drug abuse.

Never sharing IV needles.

Antibody testing prior to pregnancy to make informed decisions.

Discussing accurate information about HIV infection with your families, friends, and children and encouraging healthy behavior.

INFORMATION RESOURCES

Hotlines: National 1-800-342-AIDS
State of Washington 1-800-272-AIDS

Local Programs:

1. MAMC HIV/AIDS Prevention and Treatment Program
   Social Work Service 967-6118/6202
2. Tacoma and Pierce County Health Department 591-6060
3. American Red Cross 597-7303
4. Northwest AIDS Foundation 322-0304
5. Health Information Network 784-5655

BOOKS

1. Advice for Life, A Women's Guide to AIDS Risks and Prevention,
   Chris Norwood, 1987
2. The Real Truth About Women and AIDS,
   Helen Singer Kaplan, 1987
3. The Essential AIDS Fact Book, What You Need to Know to Protect Your Family and Your Loved Ones,
   Paul Harding Douglas and Laura Pinsky, 1987
4. When Someone You Love Has AIDS,
   Betty Moffatt, 1986

ORGANIZATIONS

San Francisco AIDS Foundation
Women's Program
333 Valencia St.
San Francisco, CA 94103
(Pamphlets Available)

AWARE
Ward 84
San Francisco General Hospital
995 Potrero Ave.
San Francisco, CA 94110

The Women's AIDS Project
8235 Santa Monica Boulevard
West Hollywood, CA 90046
(Ask for Pamphlet "Women Address AIDS")